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ABSTRACT

A survey of the opinions of parents of 85 elementary school children in the San Diego area regarding elementary school foreign language instruction is reported. A questionnaire was used to gather data, which was processed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences to provide results and correlations in the form of frequencies. Results show 78.9% of parents felt that elementary level foreign language study is important and that the elementary school age is the best time for learning another language. Over 82% felt that the San Diego city schools ought to offer a period of foreign language instruction as part of the regular school curriculum. The preferred language of the majority of respondents was Spanish. Over 68% were unaware of the language immersion program, although 82% still preferred neighborhood schools for foreign language study for their children. Almost 57% felt foreign language study would not be difficult for their children, and over 46% were willing to pay for instruction at the elementary school level. Results are presented in narrative form with some tables, and the questionnaire is appended. (MSE)

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Abstract of Dissertation

PARENTAL ATTITUDE IN THE SAN DIEGO AREA REGARDING FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

by

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United States International University

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THE PROBLEM. Research literature proposes that Americans do not have the same abilities as other people do for acquisition of another language and that they are not as conscious as other people of the need for other languages. This study explored the opinions of parents of elementary school children regarding foreign language instruction at the elementary school level.

METHOD. The participants for this study were one hundred and eighty-five parents of elementary school children residing in the San Diego area. A survey questionnaire and research questions were utilized to gather data. The data processed through the SPSS computer program provided the results and correlations in the form of frequencies.

RESULTS. Parents (78.9%) felt that foreign language study at the elementary school level is important and that the elementary school age is the best time for learning another language. Parents (82.7%) felt that the San Diego

City Schools ought to offer a period of foreign language study as part of the regular curriculum. The preferred language of the majority of the respondents in the San Diego area was Spanish. More than half of the parents (68.6%) were unaware of the language immersion program, although they (82.2%) still preferred neighborhood schools for foreign language study for their children.

Most parents (56.8%) did not feel that foreign language study would be difficult for their children, and a surprising number of parents (46.5%) were willing to pay for instruction of foreign language(s) at the elementary school level.

PARENTAL ATTITUDE IN THE SAN DIEGO AREA REGARDING FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Graduate Faculty of the
School of Education
United States International University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education
in Administrative Leadership in Education

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by
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San Diego, 1984

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To my husband-to-be, Dr. Trevor C. McMorris, and to my sons, Greg, Mark, Ron, and Paul Rickards, with love and appreciation for all they mean to me.

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"Speech distinguishes man among the animals; language distinguishes nations from each other; one does not know where a man comes from until he has spoken."

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The current study concerns itself with foreign languages in elementary schools (FLES) in the San Diego Unified School District. The purpose of this study was to determine parental attitude toward acquisition of another language for their children. Primary data were obtained from survey answers gathered by this researcher.

Background of the Problem

A study by Finocchiaro (1964) stated that it has been proposed that Americans cannot learn foreign languages as easily as other people do. However, Finocchiaro felt that this opinion has no scientific foundation nor data: Americans have the same abilities that others do. It is true, however, that second language learning has not been a priority in our educational system; Americans are not as conscious of the need for other language study as are people of other nations (Chastain, 1980).

Cornejo (1981) proposed that in the second half of the twentieth century there had been renewed interest in second language acquisition for children. The advances in technology, new findings in the fields of psychology, pedagogy, sociology, linguistics, and other related disciplines brought about renewed interest toward language acquisition,

both in the native tongue and in second languages. Furthermore, as Cornejo pointed out, it became a recognized fact that American soldiers and diplomats had been at a disadvantage when negotiating with foreign citizens and government officials during and immediately following World War II because of lack of foreign language knowledge. It became apparent that if society is to survive, it must be remembered that people are held together by common bonds and aims; universal harmony requires communication between peoples of the world (Dewey, 1900).

A study by Cohen (1974) revealed that in 1968 it was ruled that this country provide bilingual education for non-English speaking students. This provision, however, has not afforded second language study for the English-speaking students. The present educational system, according to Cohen, demonstrates that elementary schools are lacking in the provision of second language learning for those who are not economically disadvantaged or culturally different.

Statement of the Problem

In the late 1960's, San Diego City Schools eliminated foreign language study (FLES) from its elementary schools curriculum. Presently, parents who wish their children to acquire knowledge in another language have three alternatives: 1) send the children to a private school where foreign

languages are taught; 2) provide private lessons; 3) have the children participate in the total language immersion program offered in three San Diego Unified School District elementary schools or in one of the other magnet schools that offers Spanish as an optional part of the curriculum. In the latter option, bussing the children is required more often than not. Furthermore, in the immersion schools all subjects except for one period a day of English are taught in the foreign language while bilingual magnet schools are geared to bringing the Spanish-speaking child to English fluency, and the teaching of Spanish in the other magnet schools is a very small part of optional curriculum. Therefore, for those who send their children to a non-magnet elementary school, the school district offers no provision for foreign language instruction as part of the regular curriculum.

Although it is a recognized fact that cultural pluralism exists in United States society, major decisions in industry and government are made by Anglo-Americans who very often are not knowledgeable about or tolerant of ethnic, cultural, and racial differences within the United States (Banks, 1981). According to Banks, the school is where Anglo-Americans can be taught to be less ethnocentric by learning about these differences.

The ability of small children to learn more than one language is an innate one. This phenomenon has been studied

by specialists from all over the world. A study by Tomb (1925) revealed that it was common to see children of three or four years of age in Bengal conversing in four languages: English with their parents, and in three different dialects with their servants, nursemaids, and gardeners. Another study conducted by Penfield (1959) attributed the facility by which children learn another language to the fact that man's brain possesses elaborate mechanisms for the function of speech which other mammals do not; the child's brain has a capacity for learning languages that is inborn. This capacity diminishes as children grow older and engage in abstract thinking and reasoning. A child's superiority in learning other languages can easily be observed. Young immigrant children learn English with extreme facility while the parents struggle for an incipient knowledge of the language. Penfield maintained that before the ages of nine to twelve, a child can acquire two or three languages just as easily as one (Cornejo, 1981).

It is because it has been universally accepted that children learn a second language (L2) quickly, that educators and foreign language teachers of the 60's initiated a foreign languages program in the elementary schools across the United States (Martin, 1981). Later, in an effort to stimulate integration, magnet schools were instated: thus the advent of immersion programs in elementary schools,

wherein Anglo children had the opportunity to become bilingual. However, FLES in non-magnet schools was eliminated from the curriculum in San Diego in the late 1960's. Until now, it simply was not known how parents feel about the elimination of the FLES program in the San Diego area. Except for a study by the Center for Applied Linguistics on the immersion program, research on FLES has been an area of total neglect.

Purpose of the Study

Research on parental attitude toward foreign language study at the elementary school level in non-magnet schools in the San Diego School District is non-existent. This study investigated whether parents of English-speaking children desire foreign language courses as part of the elementary school curriculum.

Theoretical Framework

There are whole areas within education where needed survey data are all but non-existent (Fox, 1969). Although school district reorganization is taking place all over the United States, little reliable and valid information is available on the attitudes of citizens toward this reorganization (Kerlinger, 1964).

Even though it has been established that the elementary school age is the best period for language learning because

the child is less self-conscious (Dunkel, 1949), FLES is a dead phenomenon in the San Diego elementary schools. According to Cohen (1974), the major concern of bilingual education has been for the culturally-different, and often economically-disadvantaged, child. The English-speaking student has simply "tagged along" in bilingual education programs funded through Title VII of the Bilingual Education Act.

This research project was designed to examine parental opinion, attitude, and interest toward foreign language study at the elementary school level in San Diego.

Research Hypotheses

This study directly tested the following hypotheses:

1) Parents believe that the elementary school age is the best time for learning another language;

2) Multilingual parents are more in favor of FLES than monolingual parents;

3) Parents do not want to bus their children for the immersion program.

Questions of Research

The research questions were specifically designed to systematically extract the maximal information yield pertinent to the study from the direct content of the survey. The numbers in parentheses following each question indicate the complete set of survey questions utilized in the

formulation and evaluation of the given research question. The survey questions then assumed the expanded role of correlation parameters, the results of the correlation providing complete information required in evaluating the given research questions. Thus, the research questions, although implicit to the survey, are of fundamental importance in evaluating the integral state of affairs, and their overall consideration is essential in drawing any valid conclusion(s).

In addition to the hypotheses, the following research questions were addressed:

1. Are parents who have studied a foreign language in elementary school more inclined to want their children to do the same? (5, 8)
2. How important do monolingual parents believe that it is for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school? (1, 8)
3. If monolingual parents do not want their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school, what is the dominant reason? (1, 8)
4. Do parents who have not studied a foreign language in elementary school believe that it is extremely difficult for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school? (5, 7)
5. What is the dominant reason for parents who believe that it is not difficult for their children to learn a

foreign language in elementary school still to find it important for their children to learn one? (7, 8)

6. What is the dominant reason for those parents who believe that it is not difficult for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school not to want their children to learn one? (7, 8)
7. Do parents who are undecided about the importance of the study of foreign languages in elementary schools believe that foreign languages should be included in the elementary school curriculum? (8, 5)
8. What is the percentage of parents who are undecided or who do not want their children to study a foreign language in elementary school but believe that the elementary school age is the best time for learning a foreign language? (8, 18)
9. What is the dominant reason for parents who have traveled or lived in a foreign country for six months or more but have not learned the language(s) spoken therein to believe that it is important for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school and to want it incorporated into the elementary school curriculum? (11, 8, 15)
10. What is the dominant reason for parents who traveled or lived in a foreign country for six months or more and learned the language(s) spoken therein <u>not</u> to find it

important for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school? (11, 13, 8)

11. What is the dominant reason for parents whose first language was not English to find it important for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school? (4, 8)
12. Do parents who have traveled for six months or more in a foreign country prefer the language immersion program to the one period a day foreign language instruction? (11, 22)
13. Are parents who have traveled for six months or more in a foreign country willing to pay for instruction if the one period a day foreign language instruction is their preference? (11, 15, 16)
14. Are all parents (multilingual or monolingual) who find it important for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school willing to pay for foreign language instruction in elementary school? (1, 8, 16)
15. Do multilingual parents believe that the elementary school age is best for learning a foreign language? (1, 18)
16. Do parents who are multilingual prefer that their children learn the same language(s) they speak? (1, 2)
17. Did the parents who are multilingual study a foreign language in elementary school? (1, 5)

18. Are multilingual parents more in favor of the total language immersion program than monolingual parents? (1, 20)
19. What is the dominant reason for multilingual parents not to want their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school? (1, 15, 7)
20. Are parents who believe that foreign language in elementary school is important aware of the availability of the total language immersion program? (8, 19)
21. What percentage of parents believe that learning a foreign language in elementary school is important but do not want the total language immersion program for their children? (8, 20)
22. What is the percentage of male parents who are multilingual to female parents who are multilingual? (23, 1)
23. How is age of parents related to whether they are multilingual or monolingual? (24, 1)
24. Does age of parents have bearing on whether or not they have studied a foreign language in elementary school? (24, 5)
25. What is the relationship between race or culture and multilingualism of parents? (25, 1)
26. Is there a relationship between race and culture of parents and a preference for the language they wish their children to learn in elementary school? (25, 27)

27. Do the race and culture of parents affect their opinion on the importance of foreign language study in elementary school? (25, 8)
28. What effect, if any, does the sex of the parent have on the belief that it is important or not important for his/her children to learn a foreign language in elementary school? (23, 8)
29. What effect, if any, does family income have on whether or not parents believe that it is important for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school? (29, 8)
30. What is the relationship of parents' income and their willingness to pay for foreign language instruction in elementary schools? (29, 16)
31. Is the educational level of parents related to their multilingualism? (28, 1)
32. Does the educational level of the parents affect the belief that foreign language in elementary school is important? (28, 8)
33. Does the educational level of parents affect their attitude as to elementary school's being the best time for learning a foreign language? (28, 18)
34. Is there a relationship between the educational level of the parents and their attitude as to how difficult it would be for their children to learn a foreign language? (28, 7)

Importance of the Study

The study determined parental attitude regarding foreign language study for their children at the elementary school level, an area of educational scope heretofore ignored and overlooked in San Diego.

Scope of the Study

The survey questionnaire (Appendix B) used in this study was administered to a group of students, instructors, and staff at Miramar College in San Diego, thereby limiting the results to the opinions of a population seeking a degree or already in possession of one. Another limitation was that the study revealed the perceptions of 185 parents who resided in an area of San Diego County. Three-fourths of them lived in an area served by the San Diego Unified School District. While there is the likelihood that similarities of opinions might be found in other areas of San Diego County, generalizations of the findings of the study, although appropriate, must be undertaken with caution.

Definition of Terms

The following terms intended for the study are defined below:

Multilingual: Using or capable of using more than one language, often with equal facility.

Foreign: Of, from, characteristic of, or dealing with

another country or countries: as a "foreign language" (Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition, 1964).

Immersion: All academic subjects are taught in the second, or "foreign" language.

Language: A spoken vehicle of communication (Finocchiaro, 1964).

Second-language learning acquisition: Learning another language besides one's mother tongue.

Survey: Present-oriented research (Fox, 1969).

SIP: Spanish Immersion Program (Kalmar, 1975).

FLES: Foreign language(s) in elementary schools (Rhodes, 1981).

FLEX: Program to introduce several foreign languages to children so they might make a choice which to study (Rhodes, 1981).

L1: First language (Martin, 1981).

L2: Second language (Martin, 1981).

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 2 consists of a review of selected and relevant literature to the topic. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and procedure utilized. Chapter 4 exposes the findings and interprets them. Chapter 5 summarizes the preceding chapters and offers conclusions and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

In order to understand present parental attitude regarding foreign language instruction at the elementary school level, it was necessary to examine and review literature pertinent to the development of foreign language study in the United States. Background information relevant to the topic determined whether attitudes had changed or had remained the same. The areas of concentration were:

First, the historical delineation of foreign language study in the United States;

Second, the psychological implications of foreign language study for children: whether it is beneficial or detrimental;

Third, an overall examination of foreign language in elementary school (FLES) in the United States;

Fourth and final, the review of literature profiles the present status of FLES in San Diego and the immersion program with a segment on parental attitudes toward the latter.

Historical Background of Other-Language Learning in the United States

It is believed that there has always existed a lack of interest in second-language learning in this country. A study conducted by Chastain (1980) posited that this attitude was divided into four distinctive threads. The first thread was

that second-language study had never been a priority in American education: it took considerable effort to initiate it into the curriculum and then to retain it therein. The second thread was that Americans were not as language conscious as people of other nations. The third thread was that Americans failed to see the benefit of knowing another language. Lastly, there was far too much lack of support and promotion for a sound second-language program by groups within, as well as outside of, the field of education.

In order to comprehend the present status of second-language study within the American schools' curricula, it is important to understand its past. During the colonial period the primary source of concern was not education. However, this lack of interest was not an oversight: people were forced to devote their energies toward obtaining food and shelter. Nonetheless, Puritans were expected to read their scriptures daily, and this precipitated school legislation in 1642, followed by the "old Deluder Satan Act" in 1647. Thus, for religious purposes, education was necessary in this new English-speaking world (Parker, 1961).

The first schools advocated the classical method of teaching the four R's: reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion. Only the financially privileged continued to advanced education; Greek, Latin, and, at times, Hebrew

were part of the curriculum for those who became teachers, lawyers, or ministers (Parker, 1961).

It was not until 1702 that the study of German was introduced into the curriculum of all schools in Germantown, Pennsylvania. In 1703 the first French class was offered in New York. The first academy, founded with the assistance of Benjamin Franklin, made provisions for the inclusion of Spanish into the curriculum in 1749; however, it was not actually taught until 1766. At the turn of the century, after the Revolutionary War and the Industrial Revolution, education expanded significantly. Free from church control in 1821, public education in Boston began to compete through its academies with high schools (Parker, 1961).

The nation's economic prosperity gave rise to the notion that America was the land of opportunity. Between 1840 and 1920 the peak of immigration marked the expansion of public education. This led to a boost in modern foreign languages instruction.

> Enrollment in modern foreign languages rose from 16.3 percent of the high school population in 1890 to 35.9 percent in 1915. German was by far the most popular. In that year, 24.4 percent of the students were studying German; 8.8 percent, French; and 2.7 percent, Spanish, which had an enrollment of 0.7 percent in 1910 and numbers too small to report in 1905. At the same time, the classical tradition remained strong. Enrollments in Latin rose from 34.7 percent in 1890 to a high of 50.6 percent of the total high school population in 1900. By 1915 the percentage had

> dropped to 37.3 percent, but the popularity of Latin still was higher than that of the combined total of all the modern foreign languages. (Parker, 1961:85)

The popularity of German was due to the large number of German immigrants during the middle of the nineteenth century.

In 1874 the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that taxes would support secondary schools which offered foreign languages. After the Spanish-American War, the United States acquired territory where people spoke Spanish: this marked the country's initial interest in Spanish (Parker, 1961). Subsequently, important foreign language associations such as the Modern Language Association of America in 1883, which began publishing the Modern Language Journal in 1916, were founded. In 1917 the American Association of Teachers of Spanish first published its journal, Hispania. Despite all these efforts, the desire for acquisition of foreign languages became obsolete after World War I, with public disdain of anything foreign. The inception of World War II further propagated this feeling; even though enrollment in schools continued to rise, the study of foreign language became less popular.

> First the rate of immigration slowed from a high of 10.4 per thousand between 1901 and 1910 to a low of .4 between 1930 and 1940. Second, large numbers of foreign-born already in the country "melted into the American milieu." The publication of non-English dailies decreased by 57 percent between 1930 and 1960. The number of weeklies dropped 63 percent between 1930 and 1960. In 1910, 54 percent of the non-English dailies were published in German. This figure

had dropped to 7 percent by 1960. (Chastain, 1980:13)

In the post-Sputnik period (1952 to late 1960's), the Rockefeller Foundation funded the Modern Language Association of America and appointed William Riley Parker, an English teacher, as its first administrator. The Association's publication, "The National Interest and Foreign Languages" (first published in 1954), revitalized interest in producing second-language speakers. Parker maintained that, especially during war time, second-language speaking was a matter of national interest, hence, the passage of the National Defense Act of 1958 which provided more than $53 million for the improvement of second-language study.

By 1968, 27.7 percent of high school students were studying a second language compared to 16.4 percent in 1958. During this period, foreign languages were introduced in the elementary schools (FLES), but the program was dropped a few years later because it was believed that second-language learning interfered with the learning of English. Furthermore, English was being taught in non-English speaking countries, thereby creating the illusion that Americans did not need to learn another language (Parker, 1961).

The Vietnam War with its ramifications brought an era of disconformity in all areas of college curriculum. Foreign language study declined further. Nevertheless, this period

also marked the beginning of bilingual education in order to accommodate those schools with large numbers of minority children:

> With regard to linguistic and cultural minorities, the Supreme Court, basing its decision on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ruled "Lav vs. Nichols" (1974) that the schools must provide programs in bilingual education if they have significant numbers of non-English speaking students. The principal federal statutes supporting bilingual education were Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Titles I and III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and the Bilingual Education Act. The major source of revenue for bilingual/bicultural education was Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Amendment of 1967 and 1974. (Chastain, 1980:18)

With the Spanish-speaking population growing between 1950 and 1960 by 37 percent in Texas, 31 percent in Colorado, and 88 percent in California, Spanish, by the 1970's, had become the most common non-English language in the United States (Chastain, 1980). At about the same time as the advent of bilingual education, bussing was instituted in order to promote integration. In San Diego, magnet programs emerged in an effort to desegregate local schools. Eventually, this paved the way for a Spanish immersion program in three elementary schools and a French immersion program in another. However, by the late 1960's, foreign languages were no longer integrated into the elementary school curriculum of San Diego's public schools.

Psychological Implications

Many studies have been conducted to ascertain whether bilingualism affects intellectual capacity in children. However, Gaarder (1967) suggested that adequate environment is what is necessary for intellectual development. Thus, learning two languages would actually have a major positive effect on intelligence.

It is now believed that those who have an intellectually-impoverished environment will not develop their intelligence to its full capacity. Thus, it is extremely important to question whether the advocates of bilingualism as a deterrent of intellectual development had considered biculturalism when interpreting the results of their tests.

Peal and Lambert (1962) studied two groups of Canadian children, one monolingual in French, the other bilingual. Both groups had French as their dominant language; the bilingual had learned English. The two groups were equal in age, sex, and socio-economic status. Results indicated that bilinguals were significantly superior to monolinguals on both nonverbal and verbal tests.

> The bilingual child has two ways of perceiving and two ways of responding to things in his environment; he masters two linguistic systems; he is exposed to and must learn to adjust to two different sets of cultural experiences. If these experiences are considered to be enriching in any way, they might be expected to have some effect on the bilingual's developing intelligence. Some of the "extra" experiences that the bilingual

> child undergoes may be thought to help him in the areas of concept formation, manipulation of symbols, flexibility, etc., all of which are basic aspects of intellectual functioning. Although those who are anti-bilingualism have produced evidence to support their points of view, to this day there is no evidence that intellectual inferiority is caused by bilingualism. (Gaarder, 1967:128)

Supporters of foreign language study emphasized that

> the elementary school age has been advocated as the best period for language learning because the child is less self-conscious. He is more willing to make strange sounds and to take part in activities which the self-conscious adolescent will shun for fear of being laughed at. (Dunkel, 1949:72)

Young children have the ability to imitate and retain information more effectively; furthermore, they enjoy talking in another language about their activities and feelings. Therefore, it is believed by some that children should begin studying another language as early as kindergarten (Finocchiaro, 1964). As early as 1900 it was proposed that

> the child's life is an integral, a total one. He passes quickly and readily from one topic to another, but is not conscious of transition or break. There is no conscious isolation, hardly conscious distinction. (Dewey, 1900:5)

Present Status of FLES in the United States

The eighties have brought forth renewed interest in foreign languages. People are becoming more aware that

> the society in which people live today is not a single entity. We all live in a great number of worlds. The world of our home, of our neighborhood, of our church group, of our occupations,

> of the culture that interests us. And it is often the case that these worlds or societies each have different languages or speech varieties. (Spolsky, 1981:217)

There have been numerous studies by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), in the area of FLES and immersion programs. The results obtained from these studies demonstrated that FLES is not a dying phenomenon in the United States as it is in San Diego. A current study (1981) by CAL authorized by the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies revealed that 76 percent of the respondents felt that foreign languages ought to be taught, and 42 percent recommended foreign languages at the elementary school level.

The researchers, Nancy C. Rhodes, Richard C. Tucker, and John C. L. Clark, studied five types of innovative programs in the United States: total immersion, partial immersion, curriculum-integrated foreign language instruction, revitalized FLES, and foreign language experience (FLEX) (Rhodes, 1981). They have identified these as

Total immersion: regular curriculum through foreign language.

Partial immersion: 50 percent is taught in the foreign language.

FLES: before, after, or during school classes in a foreign language with an emphasis on conversation and cultural awareness.

FLEX: program wherein teachers with limited knowledge of foreign language learn along with their students. This program is designed only to introduce children to foreign languages; sometimes three different languages are introduced in one year. FLEX is not designed for fluency. Its major aim is to help children to decide which language to study later.

Revitalized FLES, in the 1980's, are those programs which have foreign language classes five times a week, either before, during, or after school. Unlike the traditional way of teaching FLES in the 50's and 60's, the emphasis is on conversation and culture. In some states, as in Virginia, the classes are taught by teachers who are not certificated.

The CAL survey of elementary school foreign language instruction was conducted in eight states which were chosen by the investigators because they knew that there existed at least one innovative elementary school foreign language program in each (Rhodes, 1981). The states were California, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Wisconsin. A 5 percent sample was chosen randomly in the eight states. Elementary schools included K-3, K-6, K-8, K-12. Four hundred fifty-three elementary schools out of 1,237 responded.

The question addressed to the principals was: "Are foreign languages being taught in your school?" The summary

of the results was: 18 percent of the 453 elementary school principals responded that they did teach foreign languages either before, during, or after school; 52 percent of the schools had never taught foreign languages in the past, while 25 percent reported that they had taught foreign languages in the past but did not do so currently. The remainder of the respondents (5%) reported that they were considering setting up foreign language classes but did not currently have them. The researchers were most disturbed by the fact that 25 percent that had taught foreign languages before no longer did. During the course of the investigation, it was established that 33 percent of the private schools, 16 percent of the public schools, and 23 percent of the Catholic schools taught foreign languages (Rhodes, 1981).

It is believed that schools which are currently teaching foreign languages will set an example for those that are not.

> As well as providing the skill to communicate in another language, learning another language enriches a child's life cognitively, socially, and personally. It is an integral part of every child's education to learn about culture and language. Our elementary schools should include foreign language as one of the basics. After all, we know that children learn languages more easily than adults, so why not take advantage of that ability? (Rhodes, 1981:6)

The immersion program has commanded considerable attention from bilingualism-for-Anglos advocates. Rosalyn Kalmar (1975) reported on the Culver City, California, Spanish Immersion Program (SIP), which began in 1971. Results were

recorded over a four-year period. Dr. Cohen (U.C.L.A. English Department), assisting the district in evaluating the program, observed that SIP children did as well as, or better than, those engaged in regular programs. The children in the SIP in Culver City were taught all subjects in Spanish through grades K-6. This enabled them to learn in a natural, casual manner. When the students reached second grade, an hour a day of English was included in the curriculum. By grade 6, English and Spanish were used in equal proportion. It was observed that third grade students who had entered the program in kindergarten were fluent. Many second graders were fluent as well (Kalmar, 1975). Aside from the language acquisition, the children were exposed to culture through room decorations, songs, etc., thus inspiring

> all students to develop "ethnic literacy" since most Americans are very ignorant about culture in the United States other than their own. Americans are socialized within ethnic enclaves where they acquire the belief that their ethnic cultures are the only valued and functional ones. (Banks, 1981:228)

Current Status of FLES in the San Diego Area

Due to budget restrictions and priorities in the educational setting shifting to desegregation maneuvers, the foreign languages in elementary schools program in its traditional sense became a thing of the past in the late 1960's. In San Diego, FLES gave way to bilingual education and immersion programs.

> Because the major concern of bilingual education has been for the culturally different and often economically disadvantaged child, the Anglo student has simply "tagged along" in bilingual education programs funded through Title VII of the Bilingual Education Act. His learning of the minority group's language has often proceeded slowly, without support or concern, at least in the initial stages. (Cohen, 1974:95)

The immersion program, started in San Diego in 1977, while satisfying desegregation purposes, has, however, offered majority children the opportunity to become bilingual (Rhodes, 1981). A study (Spring, 1982), as yet unpublished, conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics, specifically concentrated on the immersion programs of the nation. The survey, which sought to obtain feedback, was distributed to parents whose children were enrolled in the Spanish and French immersion programs. In San Diego, they were distributed to parents of students at Horton and Longfellow elementary schools. Only ten parents responded.

The questions asked in the survey were related to why the parents chose to enroll their children in the program; what cautions or guidelines they might offer to prospective immersion students' parents; what was expected of the program; what might have worried the parents before enrolling their children in immersion; what would the benefits of the program be; were initial concerns well founded or not; should parents have been given more information about the immersion program, and what kind of information might have proved useful; what

did the children like best about immersion; what, if anything, did the chldren not like about the program. The questionnaire also inquired about the parents' own involvement with foreign languages--had they studied foreign languages themselves; did they enjoy foreign language study; were they inspired by their children's involvement in immersion to study foreign languages themselves; and did they have any additional comments (Rhodes, 1981).

Seven out of ten parents responded that they had been prompted to enroll their children in an immersion program because they (or at least one of the parents) were bilingual. The other three had enrolled their children because they realized the importance of bilingualism. As for the cultural benefits question, only one of the ten sets of parents found no cultural or social benefits.

The cautions or guidelines segments of the questionnaire were answered with diversity: the program is not for everyone; parents need to have a relaxed attitude about academics; parents must keep up English instruction in the home; parents should be committed to their children's education; only the very bright child should enter such a program; parents cannot compare learning processes of their children until the children have reached grade 3 or 4; parents do not like the immersion program's being part of the magnet program; parents should make sure that their children want to learn a foreign language.

There was an unanimous reply as to what parents expected that the program would do for their children: create more career opportunities (Rhodes, 1981).

The main concern of parents was that their children's English skills development would suffer. When asked whether this concern was well founded, four out of ten felt that it had not been justified, one felt that it had been resolved, one "yes and no," one that the child was behind in English, one that the children had lost out on their social life, and one, that it was too soon to tell.

Eight out of ten parents felt that they had gotten adequate information regarding the program, while one parent said that it would have been preferable to have spoken to other parents about it; and the other would have liked to have had access to written work of students at the higher grade levels.

Only six out of ten parents answered the question about the kind of information that might have been helpful. Two felt that they would have liked to know what happens to children who drop out of the program; one would have liked more reassurance as to the English language progress; one would have liked children to have auditory and visual screening before they entered the program; and the other two would have liked the parents to be kept better informed about what was going on in the program.

Rhodes (1981) reported that according to the parents,

the children enjoyed learning a second language, the bus rides were pleasurable for some, they had pride in knowing something that other children in their neighborhood did not, and, for one, the math class was the highlight of the language immersion program.

What did the children not enjoy about the program? One hated Spanish; another disliked not being able to use any English; another found it boring. One parent did not know how the child felt; another one stated that her child would have preferred going to school in her own neighborhood; one said that his child hated reading in Spanish; and the tenth had no dislikes at all.

The remarks in the "additional comments" section were favorable in almost all instances.

Summary

The historical background has demonstrated that, from its infancy through its present status, foreign language study in the nation's schools has been affected by economic, social, and political factors.

Present psychological studies did not indicate any detrimental effects to children studying another language.

Public opinion should be an important factor in determining the future of foreign languages in elementary schools in San Diego; whether or not a child might have the benefit

of learning a second language without being bussed should be an important consideration.

There is evidence that the eighties have brought forth renewed interest in the previously neglected area of research on foreign language study in the United States. There is a need for more research in the San Diego area.

CHAPTER THREE

Method

Chapter Three is a description of the survey methodology utilized to gather the information for this research. Sections on design, source of data, procedure, and data analysis procedure are also included in this chapter.

Research Design

Since it was the goal of the researcher to present parental opinion regarding foreign language study at the elementary school level in the San Diego area, the survey research method was utilized for gathering data because "survey research is probably best adapted to obtaining personal and social facts, beliefs, and attitudes" (Kerlinger, 1964:422). The questionnaire utilized for this study was designed by the researcher (Appendix B). Because there was no previous research in the area of parental opinion toward FLES, an appropriate questionnaire had to be devised in order to gather data. The survey method utilized was the descriptive type:

> in educational research there are two conditions which occurring together suggest and justify the descriptive survey: first, that there is an absence of information about a problem of educational significance, and second, that the situations which could generate this information do exist and are accessible to the researcher. (Fox, 1969:424)

Selection of the participants for the survey was deliberate.

> As the name implies, deliberate selection is a process whereby the researcher directly and deliberately selects specific elements of the population as his invited sample. Deliberate sample selection is often sensible and simple to justify. If, within a population, there are some elements which we believe are particularly crucial to the study, then the only way to assure this is to deliberately select them. (Fox, 1969:340)

The questionnaire was given to 500 persons who were instructors, office staff members, or students at Miramar College. The exact number of parents among these 500 was unknown. However, the participants were only those persons who had children in the pre-school to grade six age group, in order to gather data directly pertinent to the research project of obtaining parental opinions from people who would be directly involved with elementary school children. There were 185 respondents who were parents and who were qualified to answer the survey questionnaire.

Source of the Data

The researcher is a foreign languages instructor for the San Diego Community College District and is presently teaching at Miramar College. She was granted permission by the Dean of Instructional Services at Miramar College to implement questionnaires on campus to persons who were parents of pre-school or elementary school children.

Because Miramar College operates on an open enrollment basis, various geographic locations in the San Diego area

were represented in the sampling. One hundred and eighty-five parents responded.

Procedure

The researcher sought assistance from instructors at Miramar College by explaining the nature and purpose of the survey and requesting that instructors distribute the questionnaires to their students and then collect them.

Instructions were that questionnaires be distributed only to those students who were parents of pre-school or elementary school age children. Respondents were assured of the anonymity of their replies; they were asked to return the questionnaires to their instructors, who were asked to deposit them in a box in the faculty mailroom of Miramar College.

The instructors' questionnaires were placed in their mailboxes with a cover letter (Appendix A) requesting that only those with children of pre-school to grade six age participate and return questionnaires in the box. As for the office staff, the questionnaire was handed out directly to them by the researcher.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation utilized for this project was a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The format of the questionnaire was standard. The objective of this

questionnaire was to elicit people's opinions. Because there was no previous research in the area of parental attitude regarding foreign language study and no previously-used questionnaire available for comparison, there was no formal test of the validity of the measurement.

The questionnaire in its developmental stage was given several times to some experts who specialize in survey research as well as to foreign language specialists for approval of form and content. Thus, in its final form, the questionnaire had face value.

Data Analysis

The data required for this research were essentially quantitative: "data which can be directly analyzed, that is, counted, expressed as a number and treated as a number" (Fox, 1969:632). For those questions which were not answered, the omit category was utilized "so that evey respondent is fully accounted for in each question" (Fox, 1969:635). A computer program facilitated analysis and tabulation of the data.

The computer program utilized for analysis of this research project was the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) by the Digital Corporation VAX 11/780 at the University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, California.

The analysis provided results in the form of frequencies. Research question correlations were examined extensively by

studying the frequency distribution breakdowns of the relevant criterion subgroups. Wherever appropriate, the chi-square test was performed in order to determine whether there was any significance in the responses between pairs of questions. A one-way analysis of variance was used for one question in order to determine whether the average scores of the people who answered "yes" as opposed to those who answered "no" differed. The remaining answers were presented in the form of frequencies and percentages.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

This chapter presents the results of the study. Demographic data, findings for the hypotheses, answers to the survey questionnaire, and correlations are reported.

Participants

One hundred and eighty-five persons who are administrators, instructors, staff members, or students at Miramar College in San Diego responded to the questionnaire. Demographic data of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Findings for Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 stated that parents believe that the elementary school age is the best time for learning a foreign language.

Findings: Of the 185 respondents, 157 (85%) believed that the elementary school age is the best time for children to learn a foreign language, while only 11 (6%) did not, and 17 (9%) were undecided.

Hypothesis 2 stated that multilingual parents are more in favor of FLES than monolingual parents.

Findings: Most parents (79%) rated FLES study important. Both monolingual and multilingual parents shared this viewpoint, with FLES rated important by 81 percent and 78 percent respectively. (Chi-square [2] = 1.34, no significance.)

Hypothesis 3 stated that parents do not want to bus their children for the immersion program.

Findings: Of the 102 respondents who either wanted their children in the immersion program or were undecided about it, 33 (32%) would bus their children, 41 (40%) would not, 26 (25%) were undecided, and 2 (2%) did not respond.

Table 1

Demographic Data
(N = 185)

Descriptive Categories of Participants	Absolute Frequency (Number)	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Gender of Respondent		
Male	71	38.4
Female	112	60.5
No response	2	1.1
Age of Respondent		
Under 21	1	0.5
21 - 25	16	8.6
26 - 35	95	51.4
36 - 45	59	31.9
Over 45	10	5.4
No response	5	2.2
Race or Culture of Respondent		
White	127	68.6
Black	12	6.5
Indian	4	2.2
Hispanic	16	8.6
Filipino	12	6.5
European	6	3.2
Asian	5	2.7
Other	3	1.6

Table 1 (Continued)

Descriptive Categories of Participants	Absolute Frequency (Number)	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Marital Status of Respondent		
Married	155	83.8
Single	7	3.8
Separated	5	2.7
Divorced	15	8.1
Widowed	3	1.6
Number of Children of Respondent		
1 - 2	132	71.4
3 - 4	47	25.4
5 or more	3	1.6
No response	3	1.6
Educational Status of Respondent		
Less than high school	1	0.5
High School Diploma	13	7.0
Some college	80	43.2
A.A. degree	24	13.0
Bachelor's degree	26	14.1
Master's degree	34	18.4
Doctoral degree	5	2.7
Post-doctoral degree	1	0.5
No response	1	0.5
Income Level of Respondent		
$ 5,000 - 10,000	13	7.0
11,000 - 20,000	36	19.5
21,000 - 30,000	38	20.5
31,000 - 40,000	41	22.2
41,000 - 50,000	24	13.0
Over $50,000	27	14.6
No response	6	3.2

Table 1 (Continued)

Descriptive Categories of Participants	Absolute Frequency (Number)	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Area of Residence of Respondent		
Mira Mesa/Scripps Ranch	87	47.0
Clairemont/Kearny Mesa	15	8.1
Serra Mesa/Tierrasanta	10	5.4
North Park/East San Diego	4	2.2
Pacific Beach/Ocean Beach	2	1.1
La Jolla/University City	14	7.6
Mission Hills/Hillcrest	2	1.1
Other*	49	26.5
No response	1	0.5

*"Other" included Rancho Peñasquitos and Rancho Bernardo, part of San Diego City but not part of San Diego Unified School District.

Answers to Survey Questionnaire

The findings for the sample questionnaire (Appendix B) are presented herein in the form of tables in order to facilitate their interpretation.

Table 2

Results of Sample Questionnaire

Question	Number	Percent
1. Are you multilingual?		
Yes	63	34.1
No	122	65.9
2. If YES, please indicate languages.		
Spanish	11	5.9
French	2	1.1
German	1	0.5
Tagalog	12	6.5
Japanese	1	0.5
Italian	2	1.1
Other	3	1.6
3. If you are multilingual, please indicate the advantages it has offered you.		
Personal enrichment	49	26.5
Professional	34	18.4
Travel	41	22.2
Economic	19	10.3
Military	16	8.6
All of the above	0	0
Other	0	0
None	6	3.2

(With Question 3, it must be noted that the 63 respondents checked several advantages as indicated above.)

Table 2 (Continued)

Question	Number	Percent
4. If English is not your first language, please indicate the primary language(s) you spoke before you learned English		
Spanish	32	17.3
French	12	6.5
German	4	2.2
Tagalog	14	7.6
Japanese	2	1.1
Italian	3	1.6
Chinese	4	2.2
Russian	1	0.5
Other	12	6.5
5. Did you study a foreign language in elementary school?		
Yes (Skip Item 6)	62	33.5
No	121	65.4
No response	2	1.1
6. If you answered NO to Item 5, would you like to have studied a foreign language in elementary school?		
Yes	98	82.4
No	12	10.0
Undecided	9	7.6
7. How difficult do you think it would be for your child to learn a foreign language?		
Extremely difficult	4	2.2
Moderately difficult	16	8.6
Somewhat difficult	56	30.3
Not difficult at all	105	56.8
No response	4	2.2
8. Do you believe that it is important for your child to learn a foreign language in elementary school?		
Yes (Answer Item 9, Skip Item 10)	146	78.9
No (Answer Item 10)	18	9.7
Undecided	21	11.4

Table 2 (Continued)

Question	Number	Percent
9. If you answered YES to Item 8, please indicate the most important reason why (circle only one response).		
Cultural heritage	16	8.6
Social exchange - communicating with others	59	31.9
Inter-country education	6	3.2
Economic	6	3.2
Professional	10	5.4
Personal enrichment	31	16.8
Other (Several reasons)	5	2.7
10. If you answered NO to Item 8, please indicate your reason.		
Not necessary in today's society	2	1.1
Does not offer any economic advantage	1	0.5
Takes too much time and trouble to learn	1	0.5
Other	15	8.1
11. Have you ever traveled or lived for six months or more in a non-English speaking country?		
Yes	84	45.4
No (Skip to Item 15)	100	54.1
No response	1	0.5
12. If YES, what language or languages were spoken in the country?		
Spanish	21	11.4
French	7	3.8
German	8	4.3
Tagalog	18	9.7
Japanese	12	6.5
Italian	4	2.2
Other	4	2.2
No response	10	5.5
13. Did you learn the language or languages?		
Yes	42	48.8
No	23	26.8
Tried but was not successful	21	24.4

Table 2 (Continued)

Question	Number	Percent
14. What was the primary reason for living or traveling in a foreign country?		
Vacation	12	6.5
Education	5	2.7
Business	6	3.2
Military	45	24.3
Family	12	6.5
Other	4	2.2
15. Do you believe that San Diego City Schools ought to offer a period of foreign language study as part of its elementary school curriculum?		
Yes	153	82.7
No	15	8.1
Undecided	16	8.6
No response	1	0.5
16. Would you be willing as a parent to pay $150 a year for your child to be taught a foreign language in the elementary school?		
Yes	86	46.5
No	51	27.6
Undecided	47	25.4
No response	1	0.5
17. Which language would be your preference for your child?		
Spanish	111	60.0
French	9	4.9
German	3.	1.6
Tagalog	2	1.1
Japanese	1	0.5
Italian	1	0.5
Chinese	2	1.1
Russian	2	1.1
None	5	2.7
Other	8	4.3
No response	38	20.5

Table 2 (Continued)

	Question	Number	Percent
18.	Do you believe that the elementary school is the best time for learning another language?		
	Yes	157	84.9
	No	11	5.9
	Undecided	17	9.2
19.	San Diego City Schools now offer total language immersion in Spanish and French in three elementary schools for any child attending public elementary school. Immersion means that all subjects except for one period a day of English are taught in the foreign language. Are you aware of the language immersion program?		
	Yes	52	28.1
	No	127	68.6
	No response	6	3.2
20.	Would you like your child to participate in the language immersion program?		
	Yes	62	33.5
	No (Skip Item 21)	81	43.8
	Undecided	40	21.6
	No response	2	1.1
21.	If you answered YES or UNDECIDED to Item 20, would you be willing to have your child bussed in order for him/her to participate in the language immersion program?		
	Yes	33	17.8
	No	41	22.2
	Undecided	26	14.1
22.	Would you prefer foreign language study in your neighborhood school rather than in the language immersion program?		
	Yes	153	82.7
	No	12	6.5
	Undecided	18	9.7
	No response	2	1.1

Research Questions - Results and Correlations

Research question 1 stated: Are parents who have studied a foreign language in elementary school more inclined to want their children to do the same?

Table 3

Findings for Research Question 1

	Important	Not Important	Undecided
Studied foreign language	54 (87%)	4 (7%)	4 (7%)
Did not study foreign language	90 (74%)	14 (12%)	17 (14%)

The above results indicate that there was very little difference of opinion regarding foreign language study in elementary school between the parents who had studied a foreign language in elementary school and those who had not: 84 percent and 74 percent, respectively, thought that foreign language study in elementary school was important (Chi-square = 4.00, no significance).

Research question 2 stated: How important do monolingual parents believe that it is for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school?

Findings: Most parents (79%) rated elementary school foreign language instruction important. Both multilingual

and monolingual parents shared this viewpoint. Foreign language study was rated important by 81 percent and 78 percent, respectively (Chi-square [2] = 0.34, no significance).

Research question 3 stated: If monolingual parents do not want their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school, what is the dominant reason?

Findings: Only 12 (9.8%) monolingual parents rated FLES study unimportant, and they did not have a consistent reason for their opinion.

Research question 4 stated: Do parents who have not studied a foreign language in elementary school believe that it is extremely difficult for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school?

Findings: Of the 120 parents who had not studied a foreign language in elementary school, (1) 4, or 3 percent, expected foreign language to be extremely difficult for their children; (2) 14, or 11.7 percent, rated such learning moderately difficult; (3) 37, or 30.8 percent, felt it would be somewhat difficult; and (4) 65, or 54.2 percent, thought it would not be difficult.

Research question 5 stated: What is the dominant reason for those parents who believe that it would be difficult for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school still to find it important for their children to learn one?

Findings: There were 49 respondents who anticipated that their children would have some difficulty with foreign language study but still considered it important.

Table 4

Findings for Research Question 5

Reasons	Number	Percent
Cultural heritage	3	6
Social exchange	18	36
Inter-country education	2	4
Economic	3	6
Professional	5	10
Personal enrichment	9	18
Other	1	2
Many reasons	6	12
No response	2	4

Research question 6 stated: What is the dominant reason for those parents who believe that it is not difficult for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school not to want their children to learn one?

Findings: Only two parents who thought FLES study "not at all difficult" rated such study not important. They both stated reasons not listed in the questionnaire.

Research question 7 stated: Do parents who are undecided about the importance of the study of foreign language in elementary school believe that it should be included in the elementary school curriculum?

Findings: Of the 21 parents who were undecided about the value of elementary school foreign language study, 11, or 52 percent (over half) supported a foreign language period; 2, or 10 percent, opposed it; and 8, or 38 percent, were undecided.

Research question 8 stated: What is the percentage of parents who are undecided or who do not want their children to study a foreign language in elementary school but believe that the elementary school age is the best time for learning a foreign language?

Table 5

Findings for Research Question 8

	Number	Percent
Yes	22	56.4
No	8	20.5
Undecided	9	23.1

The above results showed that more than half the parents who were undecided or who did not feel that foreign language study was important still believed that the elementary school age is the best time for learning a foreign language.

Research question 9 stated: What is the dominant reason for parents who had traveled or lived in a foreign country for six months or more but had not learned the language(s) spoken therein to believe that it is important for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school and to want foreign language incorporated in the elementary school curriculum?

Findings: Thirty-two parents had resided in a foreign country for six months or more, had failed to learn the language, but considered foreign language in elementary school important. They answered as follows:

Table 6

Findings for Research Question 9

Reasons	Number	Percent
Cultural heritage	4	12.5
Social exchange	12	37.5
Inter-country education	2	6.3
Economic	3	9.4
Professional	1	3.1
Personal enrichment	6	18.8
Other	4	12.5

Research question 10 stated: What is the dominant reason for parents who traveled or lived in a foreign country for six months or more and have learned the language(s) spoken therein not to find it important for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school?

Findings: Only two parents who had traveled in a foreign country for six months or more did not support FLES study. They did not share a reason.

Research question 11 stated: What is the dominant reason for parents whose first language was not English to find it important for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school?

Findings: Among the 26 parents whose native language was not English and who considered foreign language in elementary school important, the most common response was "cultural heritage" with 7 (27%) responses.

Research question 12 stated: Do parents who have traveled for six months or more in a foreign country prefer the language immersion program to the one period a day foreign language instruction?

Table 7

Findings for Research Question 12

Prefers Immersion Program to Neighborhood School	Number	Percent
Yes	7	8.3
No	67	79.8
Undecided	8	9.5
No response	2	2.4

The above results indicated that more than three-quarters of the parents (79.8%) who had traveled for six months or more in a foreign country did not prefer the language immersion program to the one period a day foreign language instruction.

Research question 13 stated: Are parents who have traveled for six months or more in a foreign country willing to pay for foreign language instruction if the one period a day method of study were their preference?

Table 8

Findings for Research Question 13

	Number	Percent
Yes	40	54.8
No	14	19.2
Undecided	18	24.7
No response	1	1.4

Research question 14 stated: Are all parents (multilingual or monolingual) who find it important for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school willing to pay for that foreign language instruction?

Findings: One hundred forty-five parents considered foreign language study in elementary school important and answered as follows:

Table 9

Findings for Research Question 14

	Number	Percent
Yes	83	57
No	25	17
Undecided	37	26

The above results indicated that more than half (57%) of the parents (monolingual or multilingual) were willing to pay for foreign language instruction.

Research question 15 stated: Do multilingual parents believe that the elementary school age is best for learning a foreign language?

Table 10

Findings for Research Question 15

	Number	Percent
Yes	54	86
No	5	8
Undecided	4	6

The above results indicated that most (86%) of the multilingual parents believed that the elementary school age is best for learning a foreign language.

Research question 16 stated: Do parents who are multilingual prefer that their children learn the same language(s) they speak?

Table 11

Findings for Research Question 16

	Number	Percent
Yes	40	63
No	23	37

The above results indicated that 63 percent of these multilingual parents preferred that their children learn the same languages that they spoke.

Research question 17 stated: Did the parents who are multilingual study a foreign language in elementary school?

Findings: Of the 63 multilingual respondents, 36, or 57 percent, had studied a foreign language in elementary school; 23, or 43 percent, had not.

Research question 18 stated: Are multilingual parents more in favor of the total language immersion program than monolingual parents?

Table 12

Findings for Research Question 18

	Yes	No	Undecided
Multilingual	28 (45%)	23 (37%)	11 (18%)
Monolingual	35 (28%)	58 (48%)	29 (24%)

Chi-square [2] = 5.34, no significance.)

The above results indicated that more multilingual parents (45%) were in favor of the total language immersion program than were monolingual parents (28%).

Research question 19 stated: What is the dominant reason for multilingual parents not to want their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school?

Findings: Multilingual parents who did not support FLES numbered six. One thought FLES unnecessary in today's society; one thought that it had no economic value; another thought a foreign language too troublesome to learn. Two parents had other reasons not listed on the questionnaire, and one parent did not state a reason.

Research question 20 stated: Are parents who believe that foreign language in elementary school is important aware of the total language immersion program?

Table 13

Findings for Research Question 20

	Number	Percent
Yes	44	30
No	97	67
No response	5	3

The above results indicated that among the parents who believed that foreign languages in elementary school is important only 30 percent were aware of the total language immersion program, while 67 percent were not.

Research question 21 stated: What is the percentage of parents who believe that learning a foreign language in elementary school is important but do not want the total language immersion program for their children?

Table 14

Findings for Research Question 21

	Number	Percent
Would like child in immersion program	56	38
Would not like child in immersion program	60	41
Undecided	28	19
No response	2	1

The above results indicated that more parents (41%) did not want their children in the total immersion program than parents who did (38%).

Research question 22 stated: What is the percentage of male parents who are multilingual to female parents who are multilingual?

Table 15

Findings for Research Question 22

	Multilingual	Monolingual
Males	28 (39%)	45 (61%)
Females	34 (30%)	78 (70%)

The rate of multilinguality was not significantly different for males and females (Chi-square [1] = 1.22, no significance).

Research question 23 stated: How is age of parent related to whether they are multilingual or monolingual?

Table 16

Findings for Research Question 23

Age	Multilingual	Monolingual
Under 25	8 (47%)	9 (53%)
26 - 35	30 (32%)	65 (68%)
36 - 45	19 (32%)	40 (68%)
Over 45	5 (50%)	5 (50%)

Age and multilinguality were not related (Chi-square [3] = 2.75, no significance).

Research question 24 stated: Does age of parents have bearing on whether or not they had studied a foreign language in elementary school?

Table 17

Findings for Research Question 24

Age	Had FLES	Did not have FLES
Under 25	8 (47%)	9 (53%)
26 - 35	33 (35%)	61 (65%)
36 - 45	14 (24%)	44 (76%)
Over 45	6 (60%)	4 (40%)

Age and foreign language study in elementary school were not significantly related (Chi-square [3] = 6.86, no significance).

Research question 25 stated: What is the relationship between race or culture and multilingualism of parent?

Table 18

Findings for Research Question 25

Race of Culture	Multilingual	Monolingual
White	22 (17%)	105 (83%)
Black	1 (8%)	11 (92%)
Hispanic	14 (88%)	2 (12%)
Filipino	11 (92%)	1 (8%)
Other	15 (83%)	3 (17%)

The relationship between race or culture and multilingualism was significant (Chi-square [4] = 76.92, $P < .0001$) with whites being more dominantly monolingual.

Research question 26 stated: Is there a relationship between race and culture of parents and a preference for the language they wish their children to learn in elementary school?

Table 19

Findings for Research Question 26

Race or Culture	Wanted Spanish	Wanted any other Language
White	82 (80%)	20 (20%)
Black	7 (78%)	2 (22%)
Hispanic	10 (91%)	1 (9%)
Filipino	4 (67%)	2 (33%)
Other (Asian, European, Indian)	8 (57%)	5 (43%)

Because of low expected cell frequencies, a valid Chi-square test was not possible. Inspection of the above table indicates that race and language preference are probably not related anyway. However, the predominant choice of language for all racial groups was Spanish.

Research question 27 stated: Do the race and culture of parents affect their opinion on the importance of foreign language study in elementary school?

Table 20

Findings for Research Question 27

Race or Culture	Yes	No	Undecided
White	99 (78%)	11 (9%)	17 (13%)
Black	9 (75%)	1 (8%)	2 (17%)
Hispanic	13 (81%)	3 (19%)	0 (0%)
Filipino	11 (92%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)
Other (Asian European, Indian)	14 (78%)	3 (17%)	1 (6%)

Because of low expected cell frequencies, a valid Chi-square test was not possible. However, the results indicated that there is probably no relationship between race and ratings of elementary school foreign language study importance since in all groups more than three-fourths (75%) of the respondents thought foreign language study in elementary school important.

Research question 28 stated: What effect, if any, does the sex of the parent have on the belief that it is important or not important for his/her child to learn a foreign language in elementary school?

Table 21

Findings for Research Question 28

Sex	Yes	No	Undecided
Male	55 (78%)	8 (11%)	8 (11%)
Female	90 (80%)	9 (8%)	13 (12%)

There was no relationship between gender and ratings of the importance of elementary school foreign language study (Chi-square [2] = 0.54, no significance).

Research question 29 stated: What effect, if any, does family income have on whether or not parents believe that it is important for their children to learn a foreign language in elementary school?

Table 22

Findings for Research Question 29

Income	Important	Not important	Undecided
$ 5,000 - 10,000	9 (69%)	3 (23%)	1 (8%)
11,000 - 20,000	27 (75%)	6 (17%)	1 (8%)
21,000 - 30,000	29 (76%)	3 (8%)	1 (8%)
31,000 - 40,000	33 (81%)	5 (12%)	3 (7%)
41,000 - 50,000	18 (75%)	0 (0%)	6 (25%)
Over $50,000	24 (89%)	1 (4%)	2 (7%)

Because of low expected cell frequencies, a valid Chi-square test was not possible. Inspection of the above table indicated that income and ratings of elementary school foreign language study importance were not related.

Research question 30 stated: What is the relationship between parents' income and their willingness to pay for foreign language instruction in elementary schools?

Table 23

Income	Would pay	Would not pay	Undecided
$ 5,000 - 10,000	2 (15%)	5 (39%)	1 (8%)
11,000 - 20,000	13 (37%)	12 (34%)	10 (29%)
21,000 - 30,000	21 (55%)	10 (26%)	7 (18%)
31,000 - 40,000	20 (49%)	12 (29%)	9 (22%)
41,000 - 50,000	10 (42%)	7 (29%)	7 (29%)
Over $50,000	17 (63%)	4 (15%)	6 (22%)

The relationship between income and willingness to pay for foreign language instruction in elementary school was not significant (Chi-square [10] = 11.98, no significance). Inspection of the above table indicated that the lower income groups would be more reluctant to pay for foreign language in elementary school than the higher income groups.

Research question 31 stated: Is the educational level of parents related to their multilingualism?

Table 24

Findings for Research Question 31

Educational Level	Multilingual	Monolingual
High school	2 (21%)	11 (79%)
Some college	24 (30%)	56 (70%)
A.A. degree	7 (29%)	17 (71%)
Bachelor's degree	15 (57%)	11 (42%)
Graduate degree	13 (33%)	27 (67%)

The relationship between education and multilingualism was not significant (Chi-square [4] = 8.38, no significance).

Research question 32 stated: Did the educational level of parents affect their belief that foreign language study in elementary school is important?

Table 25

Findings for Research Question 32

Educational level	Yes	No	Undecided
High school	9 (64%)	2 (14%)	3 (21%)
Some college	62 (78%)	8 (10%)	10 (12%)
A.A. degree	22 (92%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)
Bachelor's degree	21 (81%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)
Graduate degree	32 (80%)	2 (5%)	6 (15%)

Because of low expected cell frequencies, a valid Chi-square test was not possible. However, a significant relationship seems unlikely. The percentage level showed very little difference in parental opinion.

Research question 33 stated: Does the educational level of parents affect their attitude as to elementary school's being the best time for learning a foreign language?

Table 26

Findings for Research Question 33

Educational level	Yes	No	Undecided
High school	12 (86%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)
Some college	67 (84%)	5 (6%)	8 (10%)
A.A. degree	21 (88%)	0 (0%)	3 (13%)
Bachelor's degree	23 (89%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)
Graduate degree	34 (85%)	2 (5%)	4 (10%)

Because of low expected cell frequencies, a valid Chi-square test was not possible. However, a significant relationship seems unlikely. The percentage level showed very little difference in parental attitude.

Research question 34 stated: Is there a relationship between the educational level of parents and their attitude as to how difficult it would be for their children to learn a foreign language?

Table 27

Findings for Research Question 34

Educational Level	FLES Study Rating Average
High school	3.00
Some college	3.38
A.A. degree	3.52
Bachelor's degree	3.62
Graduate degree	3.60

A one-way analysis of variance comparing the elementary school difficulty ratings of the five educational groups was performed. The group main effect was not significant ($F [4, 175] = 2.28$).

Major Findings

Parents in the San Diego area responded that they did believe that the instruction of foreign languages in elementary school is, indeed, important. The majority of parents felt that the elementary school age is the best time for children to learn a foreign language. It did not matter whether the respondents were multilingual or monolingual; the consensus was that children should learn a foreign language in elementary school. Educational or economic status of the respondents did not significantly influence this viewpoint. The most prevalent reason for parents to want foreign language instruction for their children was for social exchange and/or communicating with others.

Parents felt that the San Diego Unified School District ought to offer a period of foreign language instruction as part of its elementary school curriculum. Some parents would even pay for such instruction. The preferred language for the San Diego area parents was Spanish. It was interesting to note that so many respondents were not aware of the existence of the elementary school language immersion programs offered in San Diego, even though most preferred the foreign language instruction in the neighborhood schools rather than the immersion program. However, a surprising number stated that they would like their children to participate in the immersion

program, and half of those who so stated would be willing to bus their children in order to enable them to attend the school.

One-half of the respondents felt that the study of a foreign language would not be difficult for their children. Even those who thought that it might be difficult still found it important, and, most surprising, half of the few parents who thought that foreign language in elementary school was not important still advocated a foreign language period in the elementary school curriculum.

A great number of parents who had traveled for six months or more in a foreign country nonetheless preferred the one period a day foreign language instruction to the immersion program in elementary school and were willing to pay for it. Other parents who had not traveled and who were essentially monolingual also preferred the one period a day foreign language instruction in their neighborhood school.

The multilingual parents generally preferred that their children learn the same foreign language(s) that they spoke. There was an insignificant number of parents who were multilingual who did not find FLES necessary.

The racial and cultural relationship to the multilingualism of parents was significant. Hispanics, Filipinos, other Asians, and Europeans had a higher rate of multilingualism than white or black Americans. However, there was

no relationship between race and culture of the parents and language preference.

There was no significance between the gender of the respondents, their family income or educational level, and their belief that foreign language study is important.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, Discussion, Recommendations

In the statement of the problem it was noted that FLES was eliminated from the San Diego Unified School District in the late 1960's. The national renewed interest in FLES of the late 1970's and the early 1980's has not influenced the San Diego Unified School District to provide foreign language instruction for English-speaking students except for the three total immersion sites, two bilingual sites where it is possible to learn Spanish but which are geared more toward bringing the Spanish-speaking child to English fluency, and one other magnet school where Spanish is an option. Hence, the theoretical framework of this study revolved around the premise that parental attitude towards the desirability of FLES was an unknown phenomenon. Research in this area, heretofore ignored, was the goal of this investigation.

Chapter 2 exposed the evolution of foreign language instruction in the United States by examining its past and present through relevant literature. There was an emphasis on the total language immersion study in San Diego, conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics, as recently as 1981.

Chapter 3 described the survey methodology utilized for this research and identified the computer program employed for the data analysis of this study.

Chapter 4 presented the results of the findings for the hypotheses, the demographic data, results of the questionnaire, and correlations derived therefrom.

Discussion

Results from this study indicate that parents (87.7%) in the San Diego area find it important for their children to learn a foreign language. A surprising number (46.5%) of parents are even willing to pay for such instruction. It would seem that with such overwhelming interest toward and desire for foreign language instruction in the San Diego area provisions for its availability would be made.

It is interesting to note that most parents (62.7%) are not even aware of the total immersion programs in San Diego. However, participating in such a program necessitates bussing the child in most instances; it is due to this fact, no doubt, that most parents (82.7%) prefer the neighborhood foreign language program to the immersion program, even though 33.5 percent of the parents would still like their child to participate in an immersion program.

Parents in the San Diego area, whether they are multilingual or monolingual, are aware of foreign language's being a vehicle for communication amongst people. The marked preference for foreign language study in San Diego is Spanish, probably because of the geographical proximity of Mexico to San Diego and the influx of Spanish-speaking immigrants in San Diego.

Most parents (84.9%) believe that the elementary school age is the best time for learning another language. Experts in the field of foreign language study agree that a child's ability to learn another language is innate. The lack of foreign language courses in the San Diego Unified School District's elementary schools deprives children of the use of their natural intellectual capabilities and potential. The present university system requires that most of its students show proficiency in a foreign language in order to obtain a degree; therefore, foreign languages should be taught at the elementary school level when their acquisition is infinitely easier.

The eighties have brought about general unrest and dissatisfaction with the present status of public education. What people believe should influence curriculum planners and administrators while they re-examine priorities in the public education system.

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest that Americans in Southern California are not as unconscious of the necessity of foreign language study for their elementary school children as had been previously stated by authors cited in the review-of-the-literature segment of this study. Many generalizations about how Americans felt have been made by examining the threads of foreign language study without examining public opinion.

This researcher proposes that Americans in San Diego are indeed, once again, becoming conscious of the importance of learning a foreign language for social exchange and personal enrichment. To the degree that this research has succeeded in allowing parental attitudes in a San Diego area to be heard, the data yielded in the study verify that parents in the San Diego area consider foreign language instruction in elementary school important and that they want it incorporated in their children's curriculum.

Recommendations

Further research is needed in the San Diego area regarding FLES and its desirability.

A study of educators' and administrators' attitudes toward foreign language instruction at the elementary school level would provide valuable data.

A study of the reasons other than economic for eliminating the FLES program might provide insights to remedy the problem.

A comparative study of foreign language students at the elementary school level and foreign language students at the high school level would provide useful information in the area of acquisition of another language.

Another interesting topic of research might be to study the difference in the cognitive development of the child who is multilingual to the one who is not.

Studies about parental attitudes regarding foreign language study for elementary school children in other parts of California and in other states would provide a more general overview of the topic.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

LETTER TO COLLEAGUES AT MIRAMAR COLLEGE

August 22, 1983

Dear Colleague:

I am presently working on my doctoral dissertation in Education. The topic of my research is PARENTAL ATTITUDE IN THE SAN DIEGO AREA REGARDING FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL.

If you have a child (children) in elementary or pre-school, please fill out the attached questionnaire and return it to the box marked "Rickards Survey" in our mailroom. If you do not have a child in elementary or pre-school, please return the blank questionnaire to the box marked "Rickards--Blanks."

Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Georgette Rickards
Instructor of Spanish
Miramar College

jbs

Attachment

Appendix B

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

The information gathered through this questionnaire will be helpful in understanding the interest of parents in the San Diego area toward foreign language study for their children at the elementary school level. Do not write your name on this questionnaire. This will insure the anonymity of your replies. Please circle the appropriate number of your response or write in your answer where indicated.

1.	Are you multilingual?	1) Yes 2) No (Skip to Item 4)
2.	If yes, please indicate languages.	1) Spanish 2) French 3) German 4) Tagalog 5) Japanese 6) Italian 7) Chinese 8) Russian 9) English 10) Other_____
3.	If you are multilingual, please indicate the advantages, if any, it has offered you.	1) Personal enrichment 2) Professional 3) Travel 4) Economic 5) Military 6) All of the above 7) Other_____ 8) None
4.	If English is not your first language, please indicate the language(s) you spoke before you learned English.	1) Spanish 2) French 3) German 4) Tagalog 5) Japanese 6) Italian 7) Chinese 8) Russian 9) Other_____
5.	Did you study a foreign language in elementary school?	1) Yes (Skip to Item 7) 2) No
6.	If you answered NO to Item 5, would you like to have studied a foreign language in elementary school?	1) Yes 2) No 3) Undecided

7.	How difficult do you think it would be for your child to learn a foreign language?	1) Extremely difficult 2) Moderately difficult 3) Somewhat difficult 4) Not difficult at all
8.	Do you believe that it is important for your child to learn a foreign language in elementary school?	1) Yes (Answer Item 9; Skip Item 10) 2) No (Skip Item 9) 3) Undecided
9.	If you answered YES to Item 8, please indicate the most important reason why.	1) Cultural heritage 2) Social exchange--communicating with others 3) Inter-country education 4) Economic 5) Professional 6) Personal enrichment 7) Other_____
10.	If you answered NO to Item 8, please indicate your reason.	1) Not necessary in today's society to speak other languages 2) Does not offer any economic advantage 3) Takes too much time and trouble to learn 4) Other_____
11.	Have you ever traveled or lived for six months or more in a non-English speaking country?	1) Yes 2) No (Skip to Item 15)
12.	If YES, what language or languages were spoken?	1) Spanish 2) French 3) German 4) Tagalog 5) Japanese 6) Italian 7) Chinese 8) Russian 9) Other_____
13.	Did you learn the language?	1) Yes 2) No 3) Tried but was not successful

14. What was the primary reason for living or traveling in a foreign country?
   1) Vacation
   2) Education
   3) Military
   4) Business
   5) Family
   6) Other_____

15. Do you believe that San Diego City Schools ought to offer a period of foreign language study as part of its elementary school curriculum?
   1) Yes
   2) No (Skip to Item 18)
   3) Undecided

16. Would you be willing as a parent to pay $150 a year for your child to be taught a foreign language in the school?
   1) Yes
   2) No (Skip Item 17)

17. Which language would be your preference for your child?
   1) Spanish
   2) French
   3) German
   4) Tagalog
   5) Japanese
   6) Italian
   7) Chinese
   8) Russian
   9) None
   10) Other_____

18. Do you believe that the elementary school age is the best time for learning another language?
   1) Yes
   2) No
   3) Undecided

19. San Diego City Schools now offer total language immersion in Spanish and French in three elementary schools for any child attending public elementary school. Immersion means that all subjects except for one period a day of English are taught in the foreign language. Are you aware of the language immersion program?
   1) Yes
   2) No

20.	Would you like your child to participate in the language immersion program?	1) Yes 2) No (Skip Item 21)
21.	If you answered YES or UNDECIDED to Item 10, would you be willing to have your child bussed in order for him/her to participate in the language immersion program?	1) Yes 2) No 3) Undecided
22.	Would you prefer foreign language study in your neighborhood school rather than in the language immersion program?	1) Yes 2) No 3) Undecided

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE AND ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS FOR

DEMOGRAPHIC PROCESSING

THE FOLLOWING SECTION IS FOR DEMOGRAPHIC PROCESSING ONLY.

23. Sex
1) Male
2) Female

24. Age
1) 20 or under
2) 21 - 25
3) 26 - 35
4) 36 - 45
5) 46 or over

25. Race and/or culture
1) North American - White
2) North American - Black
3) North American - Indian
4) North American - Other
5) Filipino
6) Hispano-American
7) European
8) Asian
9) African
10) Other_____

26. Marital status
1) Married
2) Single
3) Separated
4) Divorced
5) Widowed

27. Number of children
1) 1 or 2
2) 3 or 4
3) 5 or more

28. Education
1) Didn't complete high school
2) High school diploma
3) Some college or education past high school
4) A.A. degree
5) Bachelor's degree
6) Master's degree
7) Doctoral degree
8) Post doctoral work

29. Annual family income
1) $ 5,000 - 10,000
2) 11,000 - 20,000
3) 21,000 - 30,000
4) 31,000 - 40,000
5) 41,000 - 50,000
6) Over $50,000